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Authorized Signature

Number: SPD-IM-04-101
Issue Date: 11/18/2004

Topic: Medical Benefits

Medicare Rx Outreach Month 11/15/04-12/15/04: Information & Assistance
Subject: Outreach Campaign

Applies to (check all that apply):

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> All DHS employees | <input type="checkbox"/> County Mental Health Directors |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Area Agencies on Aging | <input type="checkbox"/> Health Services |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Children, Adults and Families | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Seniors and People with Disabilities |
| <input type="checkbox"/> County DD Program Managers | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify): |

Message:

On December 8, 2003, President George W. Bush signed into law the Medicare Prescription Drug, Improvement and Modernization Act of 2003. This act currently provides Medicare beneficiaries with discounts on their prescription drugs as well as provides comprehensive Medicare prescription drug coverage effective January 1, 2006.

The Discount Card is intended as a temporary program to provide immediate assistance in lowering prescription drug costs for Medicare beneficiaries during 2004 and 2005 and will end when Medicare implements a new, comprehensive prescription drug benefit that will begin January 1, 2006. The Discount Card is designed to provide Medicare beneficiaries access to discounts on their prescription drugs through enrollment in card programs offered by sponsors approved by Medicare. All Medicare beneficiaries are eligible for The Discount Card, except for those who have Medicaid drug coverage.

Certain enrollees may also qualify for as much as \$600 to help them pay for prescription drugs. Eligibility for this assistance will be based on a beneficiary's income and whether he or she already has any other prescription drug coverage.

In order to supply beneficiaries with information on the Medicare prescription drug discount card and transitional assistance program, an intensive outreach effort on Medicare discount card enrollment is planned. This campaign *Aging Network*

Medicare Rx Outreach Month is timed to involve State and Area Agencies on Aging across the country in maximizing the prescription drug discount program outreach, education, and enrollment assistance available to low-income beneficiaries before December 31, 2004.

The State Unit on Aging has made a commitment to this campaign for Oregon and would like to invite Area Agencies on Aging (AAA) offices to participate in this campaign.

The Medicare Rx Outreach Month begins on November 15, 2004 and runs through December 15, 2004. During that time, all aging network Information and Referral (I&R) systems will be encouraged to use the I&R Outreach Campaign materials (see attached materials), to reach all callers with a single message about the opportunity for low income Medicare beneficiaries.

The Aging Network I&R Outreach Campaign is designed to:

- Reach all I&R callers with a single message about the Transitional Assistance Credit;
- Make appropriate referrals for more information, decision support and enrollment assistance for the credit and other prescription assistance programs;
- Track I&R call volume and the number of participants attending I&R sponsored outreach events from November 15, 2004 through December 15, 2004;
- Report all numbers during December 16-23, 2004

Those AAA's who participate in the campaign will be asked to report the number of events, locations, and participants attending sessions during the campaign. This data will be used to demonstrate to AoA the important role of the Aging Network & I&R system in Oregon. Any events and sessions conducted by the AAA in this campaign can be reported on the NAPIS State Program Report as Public Outreach for the next annual report to the Administration on Aging (AoA). (Note: the unit of service for public outreach is one session/event, regardless of how many people attended the event).

If you have any questions about this information, contact:

Contact(s):	Lee Girard, SUA Team Lead Amy Evenson, OAA Program Coordinator		
Phone:	Lee Girard, 503.947.1199 Amy Evenson, 503.945.5734	Fax:	503.947.4245
E-mail:	Lee.A.Girard@state.or.us Amy.R.Evenson@state.or.us		

Dear State and Local Aging Information and Referral Professionals:

NASUA and n4a, with support from the U.S. Administration on Aging, have launched the Aging Network Medicare Rx Outreach Month. As part of that effort, we are asking State Agencies on Aging, Area Agencies on Aging and Title VI Grantees to participate in the **I&R Outreach Campaign** aimed at reaching low income Medicare beneficiaries with a single message about the Medicare Transitional Assistance Credit available in 2004 and 2005. The I&R Outreach Campaign is an intensive effort from **November 15, 2004 through December 15, 2004**.

As you know, Medicare beneficiaries who qualify must sign up for the \$600 credit available in 2004 before that opportunity expires on December 31. In 2005, an additional \$600 becomes available and any unused portion of the 2004 credit will roll over.

Aging Information and Referral Programs nationwide are critical to the success of the I&R Outreach Campaign since I&R/As are in contact with thousands of consumers each day. This effort will demonstrate the capacity of the aging I&R/A system to reach out to consumers and facilitate their access to needed programs. The Aging Network I&R Outreach Campaign is designed to:

- ❑ Reach all I&R callers with a single message about the Transitional Assistance Credit;
- ❑ Make appropriate referrals for more information, decision support and enrollment assistance for the credit and other prescription assistance programs;
- ❑ Track I&R call volume and the number of participants attending I&R sponsored outreach events from November 15, 2004 through December 15, 2004;
- ❑ Report all numbers during December 16—23, 2004.

An I&R Outreach Campaign Kit has been designed to achieve national coordination of the campaign. The kit is enclosed and includes:

1. **Instructions for the Agency's I&R Campaign Coordinator** – your agency's director or I&R coordinator/supervisor—outlines the steps for participating in the I&R Outreach Campaign.
2. **Fact Sheet on Prescription Drug Coverage under the Medicare Program** – that includes a description of the Medicare Rx Drug Discount Card Program, Transitional Assistance Credit and Medicare Prescription Drug Benefit (Part D).
3. **I&R Telephone Message** includes the phone message, eligibility guidelines for the Transitional Assistance Credit and key referrals.
4. **Referral Resource Guide** includes a brief description of key referral resources.

Thank you for taking part in this important activity to help low-income Medicare beneficiaries. We are counting on every aging I&R program nationwide to join the campaign!

For more information, contact:

Bernice Hutchinson, NASUA, 202-898-2578, bhutchinson@nasua.org

K.J. Hertz, 202-872-0888, khertz@n4a.org

Visit our website: www.medicarerxoutreach.org and sign onto the campaign!

Follow these simple steps to coordinate your agency's participation in the Aging Network I&R Outreach Campaign.

1. Inform your agency's I&R staff about the **Aging I&R Outreach Campaign**. This may include a review of the enclosed materials and discussion of the referral process.
2. Contact key referral partners (i.e., SHIPs) to notify them of heightened referral activity anticipated during November and December 2004.
3. Share the ***Fact Sheet, I&R Telephone Message, and Referral Resource Guide*** with all staff who have responsibility for telephone assistance for consumers.
4. Post the ***I&R Telephone Message*** within easy access to all I&R telephone lines.
5. If your agency has the capacity for telephone hold messages, consider using the following question as a hold message: *"Are you aware that you or someone you know could be eligible for a \$600 credit from Medicare to help pay for prescription drugs? If not, ask our information and assistance staff to help you."*
6. Log onto www.medicareroxoutreach.org and complete a "Campaign Sign On" form as soon as you review this correspondence to let us know if your agency will participate in the Aging I&R Outreach Campaign.
7. During December 16th through 23rd, 2004, log onto the NASUA/n4a website, www.medicareroxoutreach.org and report your agency's total call volume for the period of November 15 - December 15, 2004.

If your I&R conducts outreach/ educational events during November 15 - December 15, 2004, also report the number of sessions, locations, and participants.

Simple prompts will be provided to guide you through the process.

8. If you have questions, contact Bernice Hutchinson at NASUA at 202-898-2578 or bhutchinson@nasua.org or K.J. Hertz at n4a at 202-872-0888 or khertz@n4a.org.

Prescription Drug Assistance under the Medicare Program

The *Medicare Modernization Act of 2003 (MMA)*, enacted December 8, 2003, creates a new drug benefit as Part D of Medicare. The drug benefit begins on January 1, 2006. Until then, a discount card program and transitional assistance credit are available through the Medicare Program to help beneficiaries with their prescription drug costs.

Medicare Drug Discount Card Program

From June 2004 through December 31, 2005, Medicare beneficiaries can enroll in one of several Medicare Approved drug discount cards estimated to offer savings of 10-15%. Enrolling in these cards is voluntary. Medicare beneficiaries can sign-up for only one discount card per year. Consumers are eligible to enroll in a discount card if they have Medicare and do not have outpatient prescription drug benefits under your State Medicaid Program. There are no income qualifications for the discount cards. Each discount card plan sets its annual enrollment fee of up to \$30. There is no monthly fee for the discount cards.

Medicare Transitional Assistance Credit in 2004 and 2005

Low income Medicare beneficiaries with 2004 incomes below \$12,569 for singles and \$16,862 for couples who do not have private or Medicaid prescription drug coverage are eligible for a total transitional assistance credit of \$1,200. This \$1,200 provides up to \$600 credit each calendar year (2004 and 2005). Any remaining, unused funds from the \$600 credit in 2004 will roll-over to 2005. Beneficiaries eligible for the credit, must enroll in a Medicare Approved drug discount card by December 31, 2004 to receive the full \$1,200 credit. Beneficiaries enrolled in State Pharmaceutical Assistance Programs (not Medicaid) are eligible for a Medicare-Approved Drug Discount Card and the transitional assistance credit.

Medicare Prescription Drug Benefit (Medicare Part D)

Beginning in January 2006, Medicare will begin to pay for outpatient prescription drugs through private plans under the new Part D. Costs under the benefit include: a \$250 deductible, an estimated \$35 monthly premium, 25% of drug costs from \$250 to \$2,250 (Medicare pays 75%), and 100% of drug costs from \$2,250 to \$5,100 (\$2,850 gap is called the "donut hole"). Catastrophic coverage begins after \$3,600 in out-of-pocket costs when Medicare will pay for 95% of drug costs and the beneficiary 5%.

Other Prescription Assistance Programs

Other prescription assistance may be available for those who do not meet the eligibility for the transitional assistance credit due to slightly higher incomes. These programs may include State Pharmaceutical Assistance Programs (not Medicaid) and pharmaceutical manufacturers sponsored drug discount programs.

I&R Telephone Message

Help low-income Medicare beneficiaries find out about the transitional assistance credit before the opportunity to receive a \$600 credit in 2004 expires on December 31, 2004!

- **QUESTION** for non-emergency I&R calls:

"Are you aware that you or someone you know could be eligible for a \$600 credit from Medicare to help pay for prescription drugs?"

- **ELIGIBILITY GUIDELINES** for the credit:

- *Must* have Medicare Part A and/or Part B
- *Cannot* have other health insurance with outpatient prescription drug coverage (except a Medicare+ Choice plan or a Medigap policy)
- 2004 income limits: Single—\$12,569 Couple—\$16,862
- *Must* sign up for a Medicare Approved Drug Discount Card
- *Must* complete enrollment form for the 2004 \$600 credit by December 31, 2004

- **OTHER PRESCRIPTION ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS** may be available for those who do not meet the eligibility for the transitional assistance credit due to slightly higher incomes.

- **REFERRALS** can help callers explore options for Medicare and other prescription drug savings, find out which prescription drug discounts are available in your area, get help with choosing a discount card, or get help with filling out enrollment forms. *Be prepared with the names, dosage and frequency of prescription drugs.*

❖ ***Senior Health Insurance Benefits and Assistance (SHIBA)***

SHIBA Phone Number: _____

❖ ***1-800-MEDICARE*** (1-800-633-4227) (1-877-486-2048 TTY)

❖ ***www.medicare.gov***

❖ ***www.BenefitsCheckUpRx.org***

WHAT CONSUMERS CAN EXPECT FROM REFERRALS

- Detailed information on Medicare and other prescription drug savings programs;
- Decision support for considering options for prescription drug savings;
- Prescription drug discounts available in specific areas;
- Assistance with choosing a discount card; and
- Assistance with filling out enrollment forms.

KEY REFERRAL SOURCES

- ❑ ***State Health Insurance and Assistance Program (SHIP)***

SHIP Telephone Number: _____

One-on-one telephone and in-person assistance with basic and complex questions about the Medicare Approved Drug Discount Card Program, \$600 Transitional Assistance Credit and all other prescription drug discount options available in local communities, help with choosing a discount card and enrollment assistance.

- ❑ ***1-800-MEDICARE*** (1-800-633-4227) (1-877-486-2048 TTY)

Answers to basic questions about the Medicare Approved Drug Discount Card Program, \$600 Transitional Assistance Credit, and drug cards available in your area. The call will begin with a speech automated system that prompts the caller to say, "Drug Card" to talk with a customer service representative.

- ❑ **www.medicare.gov**

Answers to basic and complex questions about the Medicare Approved Drug Discount Card Program, \$600 Medicare Transitional Assistance Credit, and drug cards available in your area. Offers price comparisons for prescription drugs. Customized "PDAP" on-line screening to find drug cards available in your area and to qualify for the \$600 credit. May include information on additional prescription drug discount programs.

- ❑ **www.BenefitsCheckUpRx.org**

The consumer must answer a number of questions initially but the site provides customized searches that include Medicare approved drug discount cards and all other prescription assistance programs.